

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the patent application of Herbert

Serial No. Not yet assigned

Filing date: March 5, 2002

Title: Mail Preparation System

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

AMENDMENT

Sir:

Please amend this application by substituting the enclosed amended pages of the application for the corresponding pages currently on file.



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March 5, 2002

TITLE OF THE INVENTION
MAIL PREPARATION SYSTEM

This is a continuation of US appln. no. 09/421947, filed
October 21, 1999

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to the preparation of mail items and to providing evidence of accounting for postal charges in relation the mail items and in particular to providing evidence of accounting for postal charges in respect of a sequence of mail items when a mail item is withdrawn from preparation of the sequence of mail items.

When using known postage meters to account for postage charges in respect of mail items, accounting for the postage charges is effected prior to the printing of a postage imprint on the mail item. The postage imprint indicates that accounting for the postage charges has taken place in the postage meter. A mail item may become spoiled or damaged after a postage charge for the mail item has been accounted for by the postage meter, for example the mail item may be damaged during or after the printing of the postage imprint. Also a sender of mail may decide not to despatch a specific mail item that has been processed by the postage meter. In these instances accounting for a postage charge in respect of the spoiled or removed item has been effected and then it is necessary to go through a refund procedure with the postal authority in order to obtain a refund of the postage charge in respect of mail items which are not entered into the postal system. Usually the mail sender is required to present the spoiled or otherwise withdrawn mail when making a request for a refund. This procedure is inconvenient and is time consuming for the mail sender.

Accordingly it is desired to provide a method wherein an accounting for postage charges in respect of a specific mail item that has been withdrawn can be utilized in respect of a later mail item in a series of mail items in a manner that is secure and enables fraud to be detected.

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